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April 17, 1990

UM NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE

MISSOULA --

Dr. Nancy E. Fitch, staff physician for University of Montana Student Health Service since 1985, has been selected as the health service's new director, effective Oct. 1.

Fitch will replace Dr. Robert B. Curry, who is retiring Sept. 30 after 25 years as student health director.

In a statement, Fitch said student health care will meet considerable challenges during the 1990s, including "the need to maintain a balance between shrinking state resources and explosive growth in the health care industry. ... While budgeting concerns may discourage health service growth, it is important to remember that the Student Health Service can provide frequently used services at a much lower cost than can private health care."

She said the health service must be responsive to the changing needs of students, who are often older than students in the past and thus derive less support from their families, both financially and emotionally. And she stressed the need for continued emphasis on preventive health and wellness programs.

"Areas of needed health education include alcohol and chemical dependency, AIDS and STDs [sexually transmitted diseases], date rape, eating disorders, cholesterol and heart disease, wellness promotion

- more -

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and many others," Fitch said. "Multilevel approaches, including presentations, peer interaction, and audio-visual aids, are needed to impact students on a personal level. The Student Health Service needs to be an active initiator and participant in these outreach programs."

Before joining the student health service in 1985, Fitch worked as a family practice physician locally and in North Conway, N.H. From January of 1986 through October of 1987, she served as part-time medical director for Planned Parenthood of Missoula. She received her M.D. with honors from Duke University School of Medicine in 1980, and earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts and biology, magna cum laude, from Brown University in Providence, R.I.

She chairs UM's AIDS Education Committee, serves on AIDS task forces for the university and Missoula County, and teaches as a guest faculty member for the UM social work and anthropology departments.

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